

Staff Report

Community Services Department

REPORT TO: Community and Infrastructure Services Committee

DATE OF MEETING: March 25, 2024

SUBMITTED BY: Elin Moorlag Silk, Manager, Service Coordination & Improvement, 519-741-2200 ext. 7273

PREPARED BY: Carrie Kozlowski, Executive Assistant & Grant Administrator, 519-741-2200 ext. 7395

WARD(S) INVOLVED: All Wards

DATE OF REPORT: March 1, 2024

REPORT NO.: CSD-2024-108

SUBJECT: 2024 Community Grants Tier 2

RECOMMENDATION:

That 2024 community grants (Tier 2) in the amount of \$209,415 be approved as outlined in Attachment A to Community Services Department report CSD-2024-108.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

This report:

- outlines the process used to assess community grant applications.
- lists the organizations/groups that applied for 2024 Tier 2 funding, including the amount of each request and the recommended grant allocations (see Attachment A).
- supports the delivery of core services.

BACKGROUND:

Tier 2 community grants assist organizations/groups providing not for profit services intended for the common good of residents within the City of Kitchener. These grants typically fund new or emerging community organizations, events, and/or initiatives. Organizations providing municipal services in the following sectors are eligible for funding:

- arts and culture
- special events
- sports and recreation
- community support and development

A Peer and Staff Review Committee (PSRC) composed of three community volunteers and five to six staff (from arts/creative industries, special events, sport development, community development and grant administration) reviews applications against the eligibility criteria set out in the Council-approved Community Investment policy (FIN-GRA-525). This committee allocates resources within budget availability and makes funding recommendations to Council (outlined in this report).

*** This information is available in accessible formats upon request. ***
Please call 519-741-2345 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.

In November 2018 (CSD-18-088), Council delegated the consideration of appeals to a panel of staff.

REPORT:

For 2024, 75 Tier 2 grant applications were received (\$685,889 in requested funding). The total amount of Tier 2 funding available is \$206,415. The PSRC/appeal panel recommends funding 52 groups (\$209,415).

Highlights of the 2024 Tier 2 grant process include:

- **Information sharing:** With Corporate Communications and Marketing, a campaign was developed to promote the 2024 community grant funding opportunity and its benefits to eligible groups. An online [video](#) presentation was available from the City's web site to introduce applicants to the grant process and to provide tips about how to submit a strong application.
- **Thorough review of applications:** PSRC members completed an independent review/assessment of the applications against the grant criteria using an online decision-making platform. Then the committee participated in three group sessions (January 30, 31, and February 1, 2024) to develop funding recommendations.
- **Opportunity for appeals:** Applicant organizations had the opportunity to appeal their recommended funding allocations. The appeal deadline was February 21, 2024.
- **Communication:** applicants were notified of the outcome of the deliberations.

Assessment process

PSRC members, both community volunteers and staff, dedicate considerable time and effort to reviewing/assessing the applications. Each member spent 20+ hours independently reviewing the applications. Then the committee met three times for a total of nine hours to make funding recommendations as a group. The PSRC's diversity of knowledge and expertise, in combination with the detailed review process whereby applications are considered against the Council-approved eligibility criteria ensures that funding recommendations are made responsibly, in the context of all the applications received and within budget availability.

Appeal process

Tier 2 grant applicants are notified of the PSRC's recommended funding allocations and advised of the option to appeal the recommendation via an online form. Four organizations appealed (Digimillennials, For Hungarians in Canada Association, Live with Sway and Nigerians in the Region of Waterloo (NIROW)). The total value of the appeal requests was \$27,793. Upon review of the appeal submissions, the appeal panel upheld the PSRC's recommended denial of three of the four appellant groups, and allocated NIROW an additional \$3,000 (in kind).

Transfers to Tier 1

FIN-GRA-525 outlines that organizations receiving Tier 2 funding for five or more years may be considered for Tier 1 funding. There are no groups eligible for transfer to the Tier 1 grant process for the 2025 grant cycle.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report supports the delivery of core services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Capital Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Capital Budget.

Operating Budget – The budget for 2024 Tier 2 community grants is \$206,415. The PSRC's recommended grant allocations made full use of the available funds. Subsequently, the appeal panel allocated an additional \$3,000 (a total recommended community grant allocation of \$209,415), resulting in a small negative variance.

Fortunately, a small positive variance arising from underusage of in kind grants allocated in 2023 is available to fund the negative variance.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

INFORM – The 2024 Tier 2 community grant program was advertised on the city's website, on social media and in Kitchener Life. Previous Tier 2 grant recipients were informed of the 2024 application process. The virtual presentation about Tier 2 grants allowed applicants to learn about the program at their convenience and from their own locations.

All grant applicants were informed of the PSRC's recommended grant allocations and were given the opportunity to appeal their allocations via an online form.

This report has been posted to the City's website with the agenda in advance of the council / committee meeting.

CONSULT – The PSRC provided invaluable expertise throughout the assessment process. Their commitment and dedication are very much appreciated. Both applicants and PSRC members are provided an opportunity to comment on the grant process, and comments are considered for implementation in the next grant cycle.

ENTRUST – Through the provision of grants, community groups/organizations are entrusted to deliver valued programs, initiatives and services to the community.

PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:

- [CSD-18-088](#) Community Grants Appeal Process Update
- [FIN-GRA-525](#) Community Investment Policy

APPROVED BY: Michael May, Deputy CAO, Community Services Department

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – CSD-2024-108